

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 1 and claims 3 through 10 are currently pending in the application. Claim 2 has been canceled by this amendment. Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 3 has been amended to correct its dependency only. No new matter has been added.

Applicant notes with appreciation that the Office Action indicates that claims 2 through 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicant has amended the independent base claim 1 to incorporate all of the limitations of claim 2, thereby placing claim 1 in condition for allowance. Claim 2 has been canceled. Claim 3 has been amended only to change its dependency to claim 1, and claims 3 through 5 remain in condition for allowance.

Claims 2 through 5 are objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim. As noted, claim 2 has been canceled by this amendment. The amendments to claims 1 and 3 have obviated the claim objections, and Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections made to claims 2 through 5.

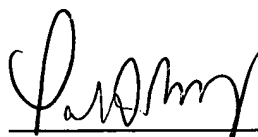
Claim 1 and claims 6 through 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claims 6 through 10 each depend from claim 1. As noted above, consistent with

the Office Action, Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate all of the limitations of claim 2, thereby rendering moot the rejection to claim 1 brought under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), and placing claim 1 in condition for allowance. The rejections to dependent claims 6 through 10 brought under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are likewise rendered moot by the amendment to independent claim 1. For these reasons, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections to claim 1 and to claims 6 through 10 brought under 35 U.S.C §103(a).

In view of the above, Applicant submits that the pending claims in this application, as amended, are patentably distinct over the cited prior art or combinations thereof. Applicant therefore respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of all rejections and objections, and passage of this application to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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